WRESTLING THEN & NOW

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ISSUE 36 JANUARY 1993

THIRD ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

IN THIS ISSUE:

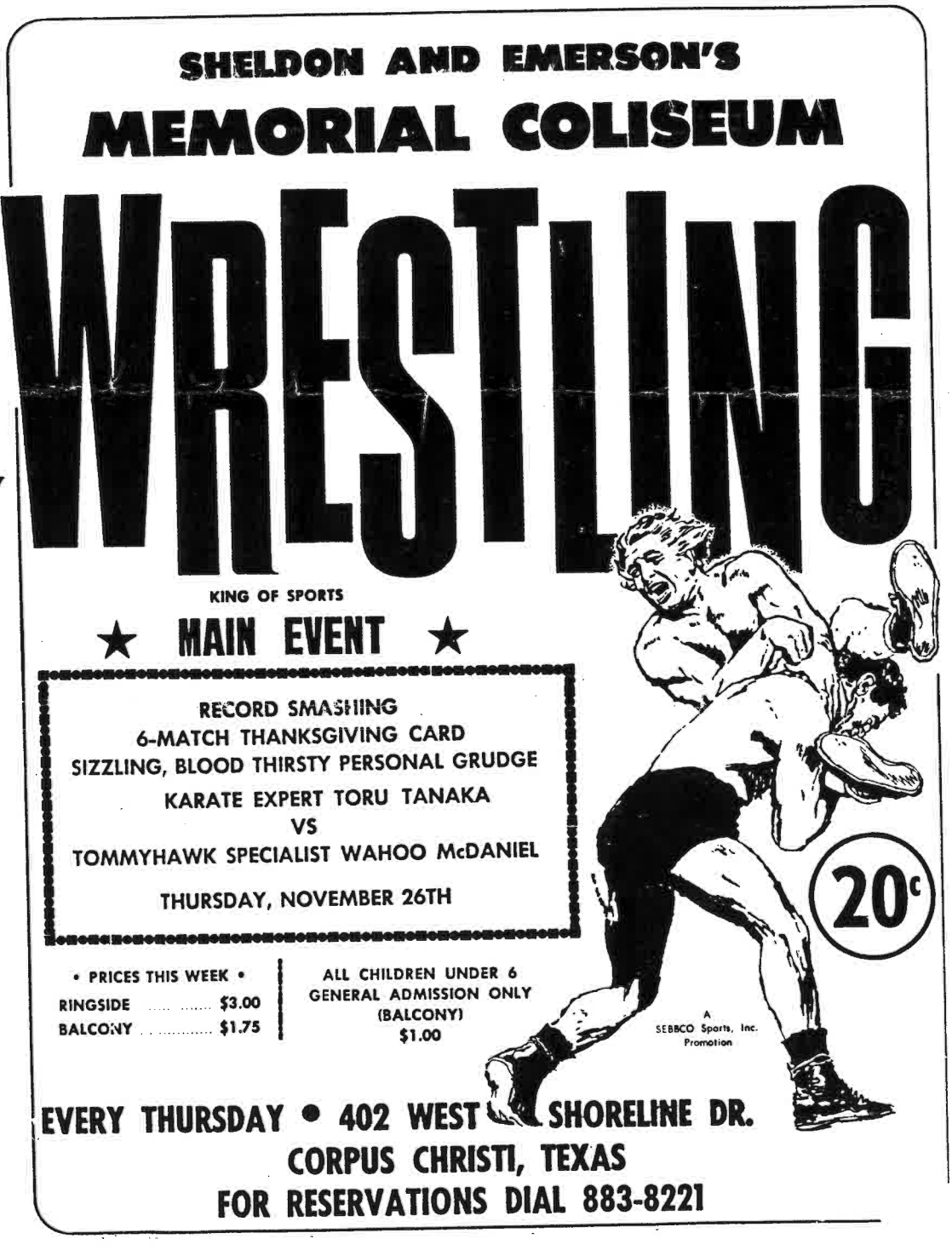
KILLER KOWALSKI INTERVIEW

BILL WATTS IN THE RING

RARE CLIPS & ARTICLES

TITLE HISTORIES

MUCH, MUCH MORE!



Welcome to WT&N's 3rd Anniversary issue!

It seems hard to believe, but this "labor of love" you hold in your hands has been around 3 years now. The only newsletter to regularly chronicle wrestling's past, now has a history of its own!

I'll admit it- I'm proud of this sheet. No, not every article will "work" for every reader, but what's important to me is WT&N is NOT part of sheetdom's news/results/ PPV reviewing mainstream. Although I'd obviously love to expand my readership, I REFUSE to compromise. If I desire to write about a reader's suicide, my late father or grandfather, or even artist Wayne St. Wayne's poetry readings, I don't want to be shackled by the knowledge that that's not what a sheet is "supposed" to deal with. The bulk of fandom's readers may only care about Bill Watts' front office policies or Vince McMahon's latest atrocity, and that's all well and good. It just doesn't mean I need to cater to them.

Yet maybe it's counter-productive to go out of your way to do something different. After 3 years of pushing and plugging and hyping this thing, and even taking heat for my "shameless" self-promotion, there are still weeks where the postage spent exceeds the money coming in. There are many times when I've wanted to chuck the whole thing and go the way of Beverly, Marvez, Mullins and so many others. But I love the sheet. It's a creative outlet, and at times the strongest possible therapy for me. A writer NEEDS to write. A writer NEEDS to be read. That's more important to me than keeping up with the latest voodoo angle and appeasing the kids who'll read a half dozen sheets but won't give this one the time of day.

If you read between the lines, you may detect some frustration. You're probably right. But maybe an editor who no longer cares enough to even keep up with who holds what WWF & WCW championship doesn't DESERVE a huge readership. After all, playing the all-knowing "insider" is a sheet editing tradition. I don't profess to being an expert on 1992 wrestling, nor am I a great investigative reporter. I'm a WRITER with countless warm memories, and a need to share them. Sure, I probably have an encyclopedic knowledge of 70's and 80's wrestling, but hey, that was then and this is now, and for the most part people just don't give a damn about what came before them.

I'm grateful for each and every one of my readers and contributors. You can write until you're blue, but without all of you, there wouldn't be a WT&N. No, we're not changing the world, curing hunger or disease, or bringing about world peace, but I feel there is a need for a wrestling nostalgia/history sheet. The promoters for the most part spit on their own history, and just don't care. I do, and I assume you do as well or else you wouldn't be sitting there now reading this, and sending me your hard-earned money in these hard times.

It all boils down to something very basic. I'm told this publication brings people pleasure. It may never get me on the Donahue show, but in this tough world, that's no small accomplishment.

With 400 pages of documented history in WT&N's 3 years behind us, I have every intention of being here for many years to come. But that's up to you. We still NEED your support. Please let me know what you want to see in these pages, and tell a friend to tell a friend about WT&N.

Thanks for keeping the memories alive...

EVAN GINZBURG'S "WRESTLING UPDATE" SEGMENT CAN NOW BE HEARD ON WBAI-FM (99.5) IN NYC EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT ON "LIGHT SHOW" HOSTED BY FRED GEOBOLD. START YOUR WEEKEND BY LISTENING TO THE BEST IN WRESTLING NEWS, NOSTALGIA AND GOSSIP EACH AND EVERY FRIDAY STARTING AT 3 AM

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Wrestler vs Boxer Argument

THE TIME has come to debunk a mystery of sports, which is really no mystery at all. This is the question of which one would walk out — and which be carried out — any time a wrestler meets a boxer.

Actually, it's no more a mystery than what a hungry man would do to a steak when it is set before him, medium-rare. The evidence is all in. The verdict is that a wrestler can beat a boxer practically any day in the week, and twice on Wednesday matinees.

You can take the word of a fellow named Jack Dempsey. No one will argue against the old Manassa Mauler as a competent authority. And he says:

"A boxer stands hardly any chance at all in the same ring with a wrestler, any time they tangle."

The debunking debacle—for the boxer, anyway—has been going on in rings here and there for nigh onto three quarters of a century now. Newspaper clippings are there to prove, beyond any shadow of doubt, that wrestlers have clinched their superiority — and generally without wasting any time either. The boxers, in all cases, have succumbed promptly and wisely.

The famous "Iron Duke," William Muldoon, was the first to demonstrate it—all the way back in 1887, at Gloucester, Mass. And whom did Bill Muldoon pick on to prove it? Only the fabulous Boston Strong Boy —John L. Sullivan, himself.

In those bare-knuckle days, a boxer's talents were not yet complicated by the Marquis of Queensberry and his rule book. Anything went. And if a boxer wanted to throw in a bit of assorted assault and battery, no one became very incensed. except, perhaps, his opponent. This was obviously a point in Sullivan's favor the day he and Iron Duke collided. Most of the 2,000 witnesses who gathered on the shores of Cape Ann for the meeting were shaking their heads and saying "Poor Bill . . . ol' John L.'ll eat him up."

They were more convinced of it than ever when Sullivan opened right up with a educated trip, and Muldoon sat down—hard. But Bill rose quickly, took a waist hold on the king of boxing, lifted him off his feet, and slammed him to the ground as if laying a rug. As John L. lay there, stunned, the crowd surged in on the gladiators—and it was all over. It took the Iron Duke exactly two minutes!

There you have it, sketchy though it may be, the first recorded mixed match between the two tops in the ring sports: Muldoon, the wrestling champion; Sullivan, the boxing boss. And the bout ended with the boxer on his back!

When Muldoon retired he passed on his title to his prodigy, Ernest Roeber, an itinerant factory hand and Brooklyn bartender. Before long, Roeber took on his boxing counterpart, Ruby Robert Fitzsimmons, of solar plexus fame. Poor Fitz never had a chance. Roeber simply grabbed Bob's left hand and pulled him to the deck. While Fitz was prone, Ernest applied a double arm lock. The world's boxing king, evidently believing he'd look awfully foolish as a one-armed carriage driver, quickly conceded to Roeber, the wrestler.

In these mixed matches, of course, the boxer is permitted to use his fistic skills and the wrestler his mat talents. There was one occasion which had disastrous results for the grappler—but only because he was "suckered" into a straight boxing match. Oddly, the victim was none other than the incomparable Frank Gotch, rated by many as the greatest wrestler who ever lived.

Frank was on a triumphant wrestling tour of the Alaska goldfields. At the same time, a boxer named Frank Slavin, who came from Australia, was also entertaining the golddiggers in the neighborhood. One word led to another, and the first thing you know, Slavin, who was evidently a cute one, challenged Gotch—but to a boxing bout, strictly. No wrestling allowed.

Well, at the end of four rounds, Frank needed repairs. He had sprung red leaks from nose, eyes, ears, and so forth. He was so enraged that, in the fifth round, he rushed Slavin, picked him up and flung him clear out of the ring. The boxer was badly shaken by this breach of ring etiquette. So was the referee. He disqualified Gotch, and declared the boxer the winner.

This is not necessarily a point in favor of the boxer. It is, rather, evidence that every shoemaker should stick to his last—even if the shoemaker is a wrestler.

If you're still unconvinced of the grappler's superiority in a mixed bout, and want to claim at least one decision, try this for size:

In 1934, the aforementioned Jack Dempsey, who had long since laid aside his boxing tools, met one Cowboy Luttrell, a wrestler, in a mixed match in Atlanta. Dempsey unloaded his famed "Mary-ann" — and the cowpoke was laid out on the range. Nat Fleischer, the Ring Magazine publisher, who was the referee, tolled ten. No one ever could induce Dempsey to try it again, though. The Manassa Mauler figured it was wise to quit while he was ahead.

Back in 1936, there was much ado about a mixed match in St. Louis between Kingfish Levinsky, then a ranking fistic heavyweight, and the late Ray Steele, a grappling veteran of 3,000 matches. Steele made it look as if there was nothing to it. The Kingfish opened with a swinging left hook that all but hoisted Steele up to the ring lights. Ray bounced down, lifted Levinsky and slammed him to the canvas. It was all over in exactly 35 seconds. That same year, Kiman Kudo, an Hawaiian who is a small man, as wrestlers go—and still active today—needed only two rounds to do the same to another boxer.

The evidence grows more overwhelming with each new report. Take the question of whether a L-A-D-Y wrestler could defeat the male boxing champion of her own weight in a free-for-all, no holds barred. Mildred Burke, champion of all girls wrestlers for 15 years, takes the floor:

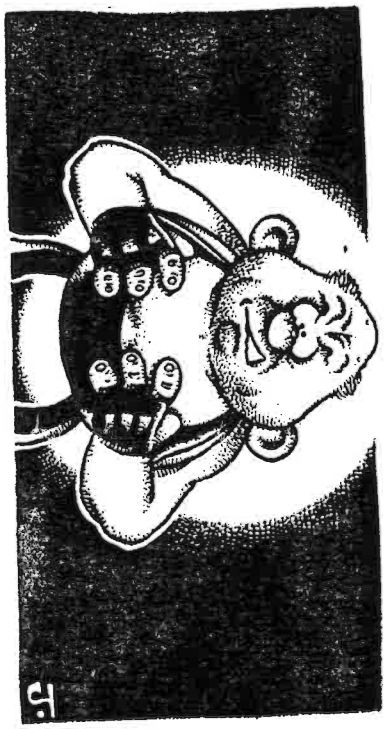
"No doubt of the outcome, at all," says the charming athlete-mother from Kansas. "Say it was me against the welterweight champion of boxing, I'd probably be cuffed around the head some, but the first time I grabbed hold of the boxer, he'd never be able to break the lock. That would

Wrestlers are not at all bashful about offering to prove it. Somehow, though, they never seem to get an answer to their offers. In 1936, when Joe Louis was trying out his right-hand atom-bomb among the fistic heavies, that well-known Colorado onion farmer, Everett Marshall, who used to be head man of the wrestlers, posted a $10,000 certified check for a meeting with the Brown Bomber.

No takers. And when Ed (Strangler) Lewis, nearing 50, learned of Jersey Joe Walcott's amazing upset of Ezzard Charles in 1951, he promptly offered to come out of retirement for a crack at Papa Joe. Somehow, none of the fistic gentlemen seem to hear a word.

And the boxers—who do they challenge? Not the wrestlers; that's for sure! Take Max Baer—and that's what the wrestlers would like to do. Back in March, 1951, Toots Mondt, the New York mat impresario, announced that he had signed Madcap Maxie for $100,000 to turn wrestler, and that Baer was already in serious training. That, however, is about all Maxie has done since. As a wrestling referee, he still is master of the pantomime—the puffed chest, the blown kisses, the waving and winking (and how do you like your ham?) But whenever he is asked just when he intends becoming a bona-fide participant, Mr. B. displays no anxiety to expose his roomy epidermis to that not-too-gentle treatment he's been witnessing.

1953



NEXT ISSUE'S INTERVIEW: DR. BILL MILLER!

MARILYN AND ME

Chapter Two

by Vic Stanley

The John J. Shedd Aquarium was next. Within the underground tunnel which connects the two buildings was a street musician playing Celtic music on a recorder, accompanied by a burly city squirrel holding a sign which stated "Will work for nuts. Please help me!" We had neither spare change nor nuts, so Marilyn slapped the musician and I kicked the mangy squirrel while Mrs. Rundle cursed them both. After all, the girls WERE from New York. This was also our first time to pass on the cheap concession stand hot dogs in lieu of the real thing later, although Mrs. Rundle was hungrier than she would admit. The aquarium was great. As long as there are slimy, poisonous eels, I'm happy, and there were plenty of those. Marilyn was thrilled by the variety, but she was somewhat disappointed that the 150 foot squid was stuffed.

Upon leaving the aquarium, we once again pondered the prospect of some lousy concession stand hot dogs, but instead we opted for the Adler Planetarium, which was quite a walk on a long pier far out into Lake Michigan. Our timing was perfect, for we were just in time for their brand new 3D Sky Show. The special effects were secondary only to the fact that the theater had soft, plush chairs which we all craved by that time. I was assigned to jostle Mrs. Rundle in case she started snoring. After several minutes of dodging 3D satellites and meteors, we then ascended to the observation dome for part two of the show - via the "Stairway to the Stars!" Marilyn has an aversion to escalators and this one was steep and a mile long. But once again, there were plush seats awaiting and the sky dome exhibition was great. After the show, being more than a bit winded, we began our trek back to Dead Head City to find my car. On the way, Mrs. Rundle tripped on a crack and landed face first, spread eagled, palms up on the sidewalk. Marilyn and I were stunned. Miraculously, she was not seriously hurt, having suffered only a few aches and strains. She landed in picture perfect form and in hindsight, it was a thing of beauty, especially with the Summer Olympics about to begin.

Once we finally reached my car, I was concerned with how to maneuver through the jumble of traffic to get back onto Lake Shore Drive (or as the Dead Heads call it - LSD). Fortunately, I was able to take advantage of the once in a lifetime opportunity to run a police barricade, and within moments we were clear of the traffic and zooming north toward our Irving Park Road exit.

To be continued

INTERVIEW WITH KILLER KOWALSKI
By: Ms. Billie Jessee

Q: Let's begin the interview by you telling us where you were born?
A: In Ontario, Canada
Q: Tell us about your amateur wrestling background?
A: I started working out there at the YMCA and went to a wrestling camp in Detroit, Michigan.
Q: Who were you trained by?
A: Burt Ruby in Detroit, Mich. Another man who helped me a lot was Lou Thesz. He is not only a world champion but he's a champion as a person. He took me to the gym and worked out with me and taught me things I never knew before.
Q: Who would you credit as being the strongest influence on you in your career?
A: God.
Q: How long have you been wrestling?
A: 25 years
Q: How do you feel about the independent promotions compared to the major leagues?
A: Well, I started with a small promotion in the Detroit area and Ohio, down in St. Louis and all over but I really like the major leagues.
Q: Looking back over your career, what would you say is the one single accomplishment you are most proud of?
A: 1953 when I became a vegetarian. I made a total commitment
Q: Wrestling has changed quite a bit over the years. How does wrestling today compare to wrestling when you first began?
A: When I first started it was more wrestling, more holds. The bottom line is 'give people what they want.' Some of these new guys today are not worth beans. Today people want the hype so you give them hype. They're paying their wages and you give them what they want. Vince McMahon saw that and gave the hype. And I have to say this, Vince is the man who started the new surge of popularity in professional wrestling. Some of the wrestlers today wouldn't be wrestlers if it wasn't for him. In fact, some of them should get down on their knees and thank Vince McMahon for making them so rich. I have to give him credit, the guy's a genius.
Q: Have you ever wrestled under another name?
A: Yes, I wrestled under the name of Wally Kowalski. In Montreal, some of the guys made the statement 'he's a killer' and the name stuck.
Q: Have you wrestled tag team as well as single matches?
A: Yes, we were tag team champions for one year in the WWF as the Executioners, with Big John Studd.
Q: Who were some of your tag team partners?
A: My favorite partner was Big John Studd, who I also trained.
Q: What wrestler do you admire the most and why?
A: Lou Thesz and Bruno Sammartino.
Q: Are you in favor of the State Athletic Commission and do you think they really benefit the wrestlers?
A: The Athletic Commission is here for only one thing...Politics. They know nothing about wrestling. They push their weight around and it's harming wrestling. In other words, you have to pay those guys off.
Q: Have you had any serious injuries during your career?
A: Yes. I have popped elbows and knees. I can't straighten my elbow completely out...they lock up. I also have 3 vertebrae fused together from so many injuries so when I turn I have to turn my whole body. I can't sit on an ordinary couch because it's too soft because of my back. There's nothing to complain about, you just live with that. I have no problem.
Q: What are some of the titles you have held?
A: Name them...I've had them all...Every promotion that I have worked for, I've held a title. Grand Prix title in Quebec in 1973,World title in Southeast Asia, held a title in Southern States, tag team champions for 1 yr in the WWF, and tag team champions with Gorilla Monsoon, Heart of America title, Rocky Mountain title, Texas title, Canadian Hwt title, New England title, Mid West States title, Grand Prix tag team titles with Gilles Poisson, American title in Los Angeles in 1972.
Q: What advise would you give to a young wrestler just beginning in the sport?
A: Some guys think they can train for 1 week and become another Hulk Hogan. Not in my school they don't. In fact, the guys I train, train for 1 year. They do things that nobody has ever seen before on tv.
Q: Tell us something about your educational background?
A: I attended college in Detroit.
Q: Do you have a workout schedule?
A: Every morning, I run.
Q: Do you remember your debut match?
A: I don't remember the date but it was in the early 1950's in a small town in Michigan against Lou Klein and he clobbered me!
Q: What is your strongest point, as a wrestler?
A: Probably, my height.
Q: Who has been your toughest opponent?
A: At a match in Pittsburg, Pa against Bruno Sammartino. The match ran for one solid hour, no falls. Bruno had only been wrestling for 1 year and I thought I would teach him a lesson. Thank goodness I'm still alive.
Q: Do you feel that wrestling will ever reach the point of having only one world champion?
A: No.
Q: Have you wrestled overseas?
A: Yes. I have wrestled in Hawaii, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, South Africa.
Q: What wrestlers did you admire while growing up?
A: I never knew anything about wrestling until I came across an amateur wrestling coach.
Q: Did you pattern your style of wrestling after anyone?
A: No, but other guys have picked up my style. I had my own unique and particular style.
Q: What has been the greatest moment in your career?
A: My first match at Madison Square Garden with a huge crowd and people screaming and yelling. I learned at that match that I could control my emotions. In fact, I give speeches about how to control your emotions such as fear, jealousy, hate.
Q: In your opinion, what does it take to be a winner?
A: What you think, you become. What you think, you become, what you feel, and what you see, you become. Never think anything except being a winner. NEVER have any thoughts of defeat because what you see, you become. Other people might try to discourage you but don't listen to them...they themselves are failures. So divorce yourself from them always think positive and it works wonders. Don't listen to the B*** S*** other guys hand you, don't listen to their problems. See yourself ONLY as a champion.
Q: Are there any holds or moves that you feel should be barred from the sport?
A: Well, when I was wrestling, the one they didn't bar was the knee-drop off the top rope.
Q: Do you think the economic status is effecting pro wrestling with regards to live card attendance?
A: It goes in cycles. First it looks like its going to be pretty bad but people have their own personal problems and they go to wrestling matches to get them off their minds.
Q: Who do you think is the top wrestler today?
A: Well, who draws the most money...Hulk Hogan. He draws the biggest houses.
Q: What is your view on cable tv and ppvs'?
A: I do not watch wrestling on tv, period. PPV's are great because the wrestlers get paid 25x as much. Everybody benefits by it. There's a lot of people that can't leave the house for some reason and PPV's are great entertainment.
Q: Do you think the promotions should have random steroid/drug testing?
A: Yes. In my time, I had a good body, and got it naturally. I took care of my body and my mind. I ate the right food, I worked out.
Q: If you had to choose one wrestler who you admire the most, who would it be?
A: Hulk Hogan. Most superstars refuse to take the time to give the fans an autograph or have a picture taken with them. Some of them even charge a fee for an autograph. Hogan takes time for his fans and especially the kids.

Q: Where are you wrestling now?
A: I am retired now but I have a training school.
Q: Aside from wrestling, what are your hobbies and interests?
A: Eating. My New Years resolution was...no television, whatsoever, because I was becoming a couch potato.
Q: Do you have any brother or sisters?
A: Yes, I have a brother, Stanley, who has 2 sons and I have one sister who lives in Detroit, who has 2 kids who are married.
Q: Do you have any other relatives who are involved in wrestling?
A: No, just me. I was always different from my brothers and sister.
Q: What type of music do you enjoy listening to?
A: All I ever listen to is classical and religious music.
Q: What is your height and weight?
A: I'm 6'6" and weigh 260.
Q: What is your fav food?
A: Mango. Every morning I eat fruit for breakfast.
Q: When is your birthday?
A: Oct 13
Q: Are you married? Wifes/husbands name? How long?
A: I never had time. I love it. I've never been lonely and I always find things to do.
Q: What is your fav finishing move?
A: Knee-drop and the stomach claw-hold.

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IRON MIKE EINHORN: THE BOTTOMLESS PIT OF NON-INFORMATION
(The Man Who Knows Wrestling Like The Palm Of His Hand)

Hiya!

This issue of WT&N has been "sanitized for your protection."

WT&N: ask for it by name. Accept no substitutes.

For my money you couldn't beat "Joe Frazier & the Knock-outs" for great R&B.

Ric Flair laughs in the face of danger, but would prefer to do it by phone.

Seen recently at the offices of WT&N: Mike Wallace, a camera crew and several police officers.

I think Vince McMahon has been hypnotized by aliens.

I'm shooting from the hip-replacement.

My mother was the travel agent for guilt trips.

Bet you didn't know department: the name Ginzburg means brave warrior with big penis (I hope that gets past the WT&N censor). Also I'm glad Evan finally dropped the MC from his name.

A lot of people have been writing in asking what I do for a living. Right now I'm into ladies underwear.

My last blind date looked like Danny DeVito in a dress.

Basically I'm a sexual Santa Claus.

I could have listened to Lou Thesz give speeches all night at the Caulifolower Alley Club meeting and I thought for a minute I was going to have to.

Didn't Madonna's "Papa Don't Preach" sound just like Sam Harris' "Sugar Don't Bite?"

Sign spotted in local San Diego gun shop window: We also cary a fine selection of blunt objects.

My father says "Hello"...thank goodness for speech therapy. Dad's name is Stanley...like the power tool.

David Sammartino in his comeback, is now putting a rubber glove on his head like Howie Mandel.

Hey Evan, has Dr. Kevorkian called back?

I spent last week-end busy picking people out of a line-up.

A Chinese restuarant I went to had long skinny breadsticks that tasted like wood.

I heard Bob Backlund is coming back with a "death gel" to throw in opponents' faces.

My life is like a porno movie without the sex. Maybe that's why my last girlfriend looked like something you'd buy in a bait shop.

Hey ref, it's in his trunks! Which reminds me, old referees never die, they just wish they were dead.

Friends are just enemies that don't have the guts to kill you.

I tricked my first wife into marriage: I told her she was pregnant.

I got a vibrating "pocket buddy" for Christmas.

Bet you didn't know department: Evan was the cowboy in the Village People.

Brother Love is now preaching about the glory of Amway products.

Just discovered the 11th Commandment: All employees must wash hands.

A recently fired WWF official was also once fired as a prison guard for giving unprofessional body searches (Editor's note: IT'S JUST A JOKE! DON'T SUE ME!).

My sister was in labor for 18 hours straight. I can't even do something I LIKE for 18 hours straight.

Kamala the Giant looks like he eats his weight in aerosal cheese everyday.

I'll be back next month and for the life of me I don't know why.

Remember: life, like this column is like the sea. Sometimes it's smooth sailing and other times it makes you sick.

THANKS TO REGULAR WT&N CONTRIBUTOR DAVID WILLIAMSON FOR ALL HIS HELP! DAVID WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM ALL NOSTALGIA LOVERS AT 3405 FREEWILL RD. CLEVELAND, TN. 37312-2030

KAY FABE DICK-TIONARY/THESAURUS BY MICHAEL LANO

Doing the job: going under, see the lights, seeing the moon, defeated, jobbed, getting beat all over- basically as it sounds.

Carny-from the Latin Circus Carnivalis- carnival jargon much like pig latin- that only those "on the inside" use to secretly communicate with one another. Kees-Arny has some southern variations that Jim Cornette is the expert at. Most of today's youngsters don't practise this beloved art(except Sean Waltman) and are losing our traditions left and right.

Marks-see Marc Lowrence's picture by the definition(Percy Pringle).
Road Agent-babysitting at it's most difficult starring Ray Stevens, Strongbow, Steele, Crockett, Hebner.
Piss Boy- refers to a mark or forced mark-activity that proves one is loyal to the worker (example:if Jim Cornette got the Front Row Section D guys to set up the ring and seats and act as concessionaires-in a non-demeaning way they would be full-fledged Piss Boys.)
Sheet-kay fabe sheet, dirt or shit sheet.
Go Home- Miller Time, going to the finish for any reason(injury or simply time to do so)

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A MIDWESTERNER REMEMBERS COWBOY BILL WATTS

by Ronald Dobratz

When I hear the name "Bill Watts", I don't think of that man in a suit, wearing glasses, who is in charge of World Championship Wrestling. Instead I recall a wrestler of impressive size and ability, entering the ring wearing cowboy boots, hat and vest. My mind goes back more than two decades to when Bill Watts was one of my favorite wrestlers.

I had been attending wrestling matches at the International Amphitheatre for more than 5½ years before the big cowboy entered the Chicago and AWA wrestling scene. Joe Tomasso, wrestling as the masked Assassin, was Watts' first victim. The date was December 2, 1967.

Watts' exploits, chronicled by the few wrestling magazines of the sixties, had already made him a superstar. He dominated the heavyweight division of promoter Leroy McGuirk's circuit as effectively as the legendary Danny Hodge did in the junior heavyweight division.

I remember Bill Watts as one of four new personalities entering the Chicago scene at the end of 1967. The other three were Igor Vodik, Rock Rogowski, and Doctor X. Igor was as popular in Michigan and Ohio as Watts was in Oklahoma and Louisiana. No one knew much about the other newcomers, either the Rock or Dr.X, who was from the proverbial "parts unknown".

Watts compiled an enviable record at the International Amphitheatre during 1968 and 1969. Using my records, rather than my memory, I can report Bill triumphed over Mike Riker, Stan (Big K) Kowalski, Mr. Kleen, Lars Anderson, Rene Goulet, BlackJack Lanza, Larry Hennig, and Harley Race (7-time future NWA world champion).

Prior to his reigns as the National Wrestling Alliance champion, Handsome Harley and Pretty Boy Hennig competed with Dick the Bruiser and Crusher Lisowski for tag team supremacy in the American Wrestling Association. However, during most of Watts' first year in the AWA, the tag team title was held by the Japanese duo of Mitsu Arakawa and Dr. Moto (Tor Kamata).

I remember watching Bill Watts in his two efforts to win the tag team title. His first unsuccessful attempt occurred on December 30, 1967. Both he, and his tag team partner - the Rock, were making their second Amphitheatre appearance. Chicago programs tried to popularize the idea that the Rock was a cousin of Bruiser and Crusher, but Al Rogowski's fame would come later on as Ole Anderson, joining "brothers" Gene & Lars as members of the "Minnesota Wrecking Crew".

Watts and Wilbur Snyder lost their chance to lift the tag team belts from Arakawa & Dr. Moto on July 27, 1968, when the bout was ruled a "no contest". Bill managed to avenge his tag team losses to some degree when he defeated Dr. Moto on November 2, 1968.

Dr. X became one of the American Wrestling Association's major drawing cards in 1968. Detested for his arrogance and cheating ways, fans bought tickets to see him humiliated, beaten and unmasked. Promoter Bob Luce called upon some of his most talented and powerful main eventers - Bruiser, Crusher, Gagne, Snyder, Cholak, and Igor - but none of them were able to expose his identity.

Watts came the closest! No one who watched their three encounters could forget it. The big cowboy actually won their first bout (March 5, 1968), pinning the masked man after executing his "Oklahoma stampede" or running body slam. Dr. X refused to unmask after his loss, saying he was only obligated to do so if he lost a two-out-of-three fall match. Eighteen days later, Luce rematched them under those conditions. Watts was well on his way to winning the third fall, when the slippery masked man deliberately broke the rules, forcing the referee to disqualify him, and saving his identity from being exposed. Naturally their third bout was fought with a no disqualification clause, however it backfired on Watts and his fans, because it allowed the masked man to use a foreign object without penalty.

In the late sixties, Bill Watts clearly established himself as a leading contender for Verne Gagne's AWA heavyweight title. The International Amphitheatre was the scene of two Gagne-Watts title matches. I'll never forget them. On July 26, 1969, Watts established his superiority by escaping from the champion's sleeper hold four times, then pinning him after an Oklahoma stampede. In the second fall, the agile Gagne avoided Watts' flying tackle, and Bill flew out of the ring between the top two ropes. I doubt if any fan was more disappointed than me, when Watts was not only counted out to lose the second fall, but was declared unable to continue, forfeiting the third fall.

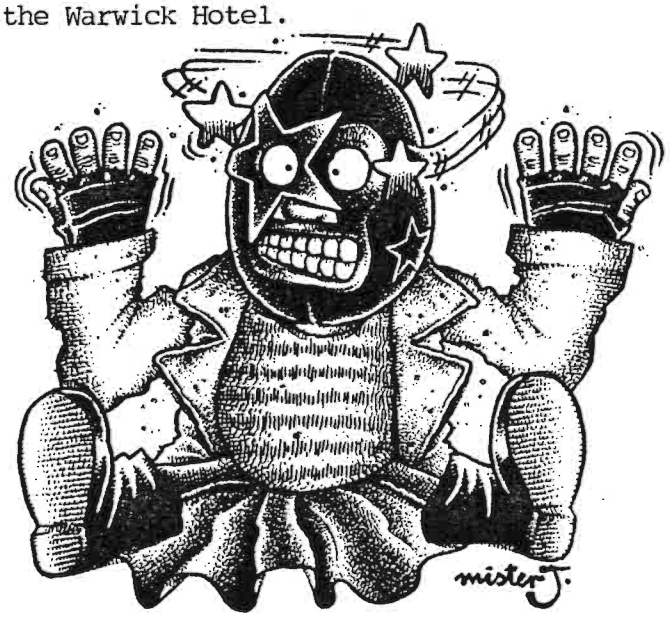
Gagne won the first fall of their January 3, 1970 rematch, pinning Watts with a flying body press. Watts evened up the bout when he caught Verne coming off the ropes and executed his Oklahoma stampede. Three minutes later, Watts pinned Gagne again, but the champion saved his title by draping a leg over the bottom rope. You could feel Bill's frustration, see his anger, and predict his demise as he charged blindly at Gagne. Verne was waiting, wrapped up his challenger in a pinning cradle, that not only cost Watts a victory, but the opportunity to become AWA heavyweight champion.

Bill Watts' career moved away from the American Wrestling Association shortly after his second failure to dethrone Gagne in Chicago. I missed seeing the big cowboy on the Amphitheatre cards and figured I was not alone. In my mind Watts was as popular in Illinois as he was in his native Oklahoma. However, I also knew Watts' popularity was far from universal. I remembered the magazine stories in 1965, reporting on how Watts turned on Bruno Sammartino, trading his friendship for the opportunity to gain title matches with the Worldwide Wrestling Federation champion.

During the early 1970s, several promoters began matching the big, tough cowboy against other popular stars. By 1973, Georgia fans despised Watts (as much as those on the east coast had) for the way he treated Jack Brisco, Mr Wrestling I and II.

In the early 1970s, I began travelling to St.Louis for wrestling shows as often as someone living three hundred miles away could. On April 7, 1972, I saw Watts team with Harley Race & Pak Song in a 6-man elimination match against the popular trio of Pat O'Connor Jack Brisco & Rufus Jones. I watched O'Connor gain the advantage on Watts, then lose it when Race interfered, presenting the distraction necessary for the cowboy to eliminate O'Connor with an Oklahoma stampede. Jones evened up the bout, pinning Pak Song after a headbutt, then eliminated both himself and Watts by brawling on the floor of the Kiel Auditorium until both men were counted out.

My mind always ignored the reports of a villainous Bill Watts. You can rest assured when I left St.Louis, I had forgotten his conduct during the tag match, remembering instead the friendly exchange of remarks we had during the brief elevator ride we shared at the Warwick Hotel.



the dark patriot sees more stars than his own...

SO WHEN DO I GET TO COMPETE IN ONE OF THOSE STRIPATHON BATTLE ROYALS...ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH MIMI, MISSY, TERRI, DEBBIE OR VERONICA IN THEM ...
J.

MY FIRST LIVE CARD
February 11, 1973, Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto

by GARY WILL

When I was a 2-year old in 1964, my mother wrote that two of my favourite things in the world were The Beatles and professional wrestling. It's not always comforting to think how little some things have changed since that time. By the time I saw my first live show I was 10 years old and already a veteran devotee of the sport on TV, and in Toronto, we had exceptional TV wrestling coverage, with shows from Buffalo, Montreal, Vancouver, and Calgary — each with different groups of wrestlers and all being shown every week along with the local "Ringside Wrestling" from Hamilton.

Our top man was The Sheik, starting his fifth year as the dominant headliner at Maple Leaf Gardens, where matches were promoted by future NWA president Frank Tunney. The Sheik's reign of horror in Toronto had begun early in 1969, and by 1973 he was approaching his 100th match without a loss at the Gardens. The Sheik may not have been known for his technical skills, but he could sure draw money. Around 300,000 people paid to watch The Sheik "wrestle" in Toronto in 1971 -- numbers the WWF hasn't been able to touch since they took over the promotion in 1984.

Another 14,000 fans, including me and my father, turned out on February 11, 1973 to see The Sheik face popular Tony Marino. It was the 3rd card of the year, and followed a series which had seen The Sheik defeat his arch-rival Tiger Jeet Singh. On this card, however, The Sheik was not in his customary main event spot. That place was taken by another man who began a reign in 1969 -- Dory Funk Jr., the NWA world champion. Funk defended the title once or twice a year in Toronto, and was making his final appearance as champion at the Gardens to take on legendary Johnny Valentine.

The Sunday wrestling cards at Maple Leaf Gardens had a look that was unlike any of the other arena shows I'd seen on TV. House lights were turned off during the matches, and switched back on the instant the match was over. It wasn't a unique way of lighting a building, but I had never seen it before my first Gardens card. What did make the Gardens unique was the ramp that the wrestlers would walk on from the dressing room to the ring - much like the NWA used in their PPV cards until Bill Watts did away with it. In interviews, wrestlers would sometimes talk about "walking down that ramp" at the Gardens and make it all seem so important in a way that has long since been lost in the age of the generic promo interview. This was the look of Toronto wrestling until at least the mid-80s, but when I finally went to my first WWF house show in 1990, the ramp was gone and the house lights stayed on throughout.

The one change for the better between wrestling at the Gardens then and now - and the only change that the WWF seems to want to take credit for, even though it's the only one they had nothing to do with - is the disappearance of the infamous "smoke-filled room" which the Gardens certainly was in 1973. There was supposedly a "No Smoking" policy even then, but it was never enforced for wrestling. The one memory I'll always have is the sickeningly dense cloud of smoke that would become apparent when the house lights were turned on after the matches later in the show.

I can't say I remember much about the undercard, although there were many big names appearing. Looking at the results now, it seems unbelievable that the team of Lee "Sensitive Ears" Henning - who looked to my 10-year old eyes to be about 90 - and near-jobber Dandy Dan Miller could hold to a draw the team of Haystack (yes, singular) Calhoun and Gino Brito, both future NWWF tag champions. But draws were very common in Gardens shows at that time: there were usually two on each card, and sometimes as many as four. On this night, Kurt Von Hess and Karl Von Schotz, who may even have held Detroit's version of the NWA world tag team title at the time, were also held to a draw by the veteran duo of Mighty Igor and Sweet Daddy Siki.

Other preliminary results: Bulldog Brower defeated Mike Loren; Pampero Firpo bearhugged Ivan Kalmikoff into submission; Tony Parisi & Dominic Denucci defeated Killer Brooks & Great Kabuki by DQ; Eric the Red & Big Brutus were also DQ'd against Lord Athol Layton & The Beast; and the popular team of Tex McKenzie (who was my favourite local wrestler) & Luis Martinez defeated Butcher Vachon & Bull Gregory when Tex gave Bull the bulldog.

The two main events were memorable for performances that would never be allowed by today's major North American promotions. The Sheik's match with Marino went just like most matches that involved The Sheik: babyface starts off with a lot of hope and excitement, only to get caught and then repeatedly bludgeoned by The Sheik's pencil gimmick in full view of everyone but the referee. The Sheik never got a chance to apply the Camel Clutch as the referee stopped the match after seeing Marino's face turn into a bloody pulp. Blood certainly made a greater impact live than on the black & white tv I was used to.

Beside the blood, a lot of the credit for The Sheik's success has to be given to his manager, Abdullah Farouk (Ernie Roth), later better known as The Grand Wizard in the WWWF. Farouk's remarkable interviews made him as hated as The Sheik, and over fervent fans would sometimes try to throw a punch at him as he stood through the matches on the apron by the ramp. During the match with Marino, a woman - obviously a plant - snuck up behind Farouk carrying an umbrella like a baseball bat, but - amazingly - only managed to knock off his fez. Real fans who tried to attack Farouk were pounced on by a mob of wrestlers who ran out with a speed that would make Secret Service agents jealous.

The final match was Johnny Valentine's world title shot against Funk. To me, and I imagine to many fans, the NWA champion had an awe-inspiring presence in those days. When Funk came to the ring, I felt that this was the best wrestler in the world, better than all the top stars I watched every week on all the different shows. And I'd never even seen him wrestle before. It's hard to imagine that today's 10-year olds feel the same way about Ron Simmons.

Predictably, February 11 was not quite Valentine's day. The match lasted for about a half-hour, and the first half of it was spent with Valentine holding Funk in a front face lock. Funk would occasionally escape, but almost immediately Valentine would get him back in the hold. For about 15 minutes, Valentine held Funk in the face lock, and no one in the crowd was yelling "BORRRRR-RING." Fans seemed to be genuinely interested in watching Valentine's wear-down strategy and Funk's attempts to break free. It may not have been a great athletic display, but it was not exactly a "rest hold" either - at least not for Funk, whose neck and chest turned bright red from the pressure Valentine applied.

Eventually, Funk did manage to escape and defeat Valentine. I don't remember how, but his victory certainly reinforced Funk's supremacy in my mind. I've heard from a few younger or newer fans of wrestling that, even though they consider Terry Funk to be one of the all-time greats, they have a hard time accepting Dory Jr. on the same level. But to me, Dory has always represented something special -- the man who was the world's best wrestler in a time when the NWA title seemed important to me. Dory didn't return to Maple Leaf Gardens for the rest of the 70s, although he did come back in the 80s for some memorable matches while wrestling in the Mid-Atlantic region.

The Sheik, of course, was back for the next card -- carving up Chief Jay Strongbow this time before 14,000 more fans -- and for all of 1973 his unbeaten streak in Toronto remained unbroken.

The first edition of our book of title histories has been printed. It's 300+ pages long and includes information on about 700 professional wrestling titles. Many histories are complete, but others still have gaps remaining. The 50 or so people who contributed are getting a free copy and Royal and I have agreed that anyone else who wants one can get it for $40 (US)

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Gary WILL | LOOKING FOR TITLE HISTORIES

55 Caroline Street North, #901
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 6B9

Dear Evan,

How's it going? Pretty good here. I just recieved issue 32 of WT&N, which is my first. I really like it. Yours is the only nostalgia sheet around, and I'm glad that you came up with this idea. I had no iota as to who Wild Bill Longson was, until I consulted the wrestling history Guru around my neck of the woods, Bobby Yates. Yeah, you've probably seen his name in quite a few places. Namely Pro Wrestling Torch Weekly, The Wrestling Observer, and Sushi, et.al. Anyway, he informed me that Longson was a two-time NWA champion that beat Rogers and somebody else (I think Pat O'Connor, but I'm not sure.)

I really enjoy your sheet. It provides a break from the usual grind of seeing Bill Watts' or Vince Macmahons' or Dusty Rhodes' name in print every week. It was really nice seeing those old wrestling cards. I'll see about getting Bobby Yates to send some copies of old Greensboro cards in to you. (I watched wresling back then, but never bothered clipping out the cards from the newspaper.)

I read where you want readers to send in memories of their first wrestling card. I remember only a couple of things about mine. It was back in (I think) late '79 at the Greensboro Coliseum. It was a jam-packed house to see the main event, which was Blackjack Mulligan defending the U.S. Title against Ricky Steamboat in a no D.Q. match. The match lasted about 15-20 minutes and was a brawl all the way. Lots of fighting outside the ring, chair shots, post shots, it was all in there. Blackjack finally won by pinfall (I forgot what the last move was.) In an earlier match, Wahoo McDaneil defeated Greg Valentine in an Indian Strap Match. Don't remember too many details of that one, but myself popping everytime Wahoo used the strap on Valentine. Ahhhh, the days when wrestling was wrestling, and cartoons meant Bugs Bunny and Scooby Doo....

From the rest of the group: Thanks for the good word on "Shiite Insight". It is nice hearing from an actual reader of your own grap column. It makes it all worth it. In closing, I'd like to commend you once again on a super sheet that can truly boast that it is "One Of A Kind!" Be seeing ya!

Sincerely,

Darrell Dickens
Rt. 9 Box 173
Asheboro, NC 27203-8920
9/16/92

Lazarus Dobelsky
P O Box 34
Glenhuntly Victoria 3163
Australia

Dear Evan

I enclose a copy of the latest issue of Piledriver magazine 10 with a plug for your annual on page 37. Let me just say that I enjoyed the WT&N annual tremendously and all the more so because it allowed me to put into historical perspective many loose snippets of trivia and information (is there a difference?) which I had accumulated over the years relating to pro wrestling in America.
The biggest let down was, of course, that there wasn't more to read. Nostalgia is sometimes the most dangerous drug of all. I look forward to many more similar annual excursions.
For inclusion next time you print plugs, I am selling back issues of Piledrivers 8 and 9 (80 pages in glorious two tones) with a comprehensive interview with legendary wrestler Roy Heffernan for $10.00 (cash or check) to US readers. Write to the above address.
I also enclose for your information an article I was commissioned to write on the sixties wrestling scene and its impact on Australia's diverse ethnic mix for a magazine called GENERATION. Let's face it, how many people can say that they actually get paid to write about wrestling for a living?

Warmest wishes

Lazarus Dobelsky

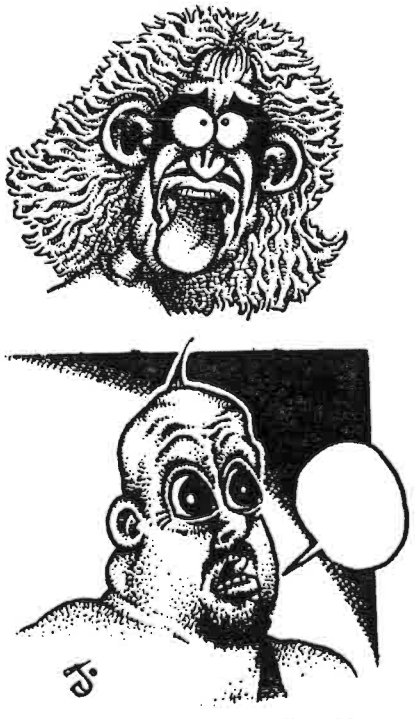
June 25, 1992

Last chance: WT&N 1992 Annual- $7. Look for 1993 Annual - Details coming shortly!!!

TED DIBIASE

1976	MID-SOUTH US Tag Team Title, with Dick Murdoch
1976	MID-SOUTH North American Title
1978	ST. LOUIS Missouri Title
1979	WWWF North American Title
1980	MID-SOUTH North American Title
1980	ST. LOUIS Missouri Title
1981	GEORGIA National Tag Team Title, once with Stan Frazier, once with Steve Olsonoski
1981	MID-SOUTH North American Title
1982	MID-SOUTH North American Title
1982	MID-SOUTH MSWA Tag Team Title, with Matt Borne
1983	MID-SOUTH MSWA Tag Team Title, with Mr. Olympia
1983	JAPAN All Japan United National Title
1983	GEORGIA National Title
1984	GEORGIA National Title
1984	MID-SOUTH MSWA Tag Team Title, with Hercules Hernandez
1985	MID-SOUTH, MSWA Tag Team Title, with Steve Milliams (twice)
1985	MID-SOUTH North American Title
1985	TEXAS ALL-STAR US Title
1987	JAPAN All Japan PWF Tag Team Title, with Stan Hansen (twice)
1992	WWF Tag Team Title, with IRS

Was also the losing finalist in the 1986 All Japan United National Title tournament and in the 1988 WWF Title tournament



TUESDAY, JULY 7, 1970 - - - 8:30 P.M. TX

ED WATT, Matchmaker

233	CYCLONE SOTA Puerto Rico	First Event vs.	won 12 min MIKE PAIDOUSIS Knoxville, Tenn.	253
240	won 13 MR. WRESTLING	Second Event vs.	JIM PESEK Des Moines, Iowa	230
240	RONNIE ETCHISON St. Joseph, Mo	Special Event vs.	won 12 BIG BOB ORTON Kansas	240

1 Fall—30-Minute Time Limit

13 falls 5 — **MAIN EVENT** — 2 falls 6 / 3 falls

270	FRITZ VON ERICH Lake Dallas	VS.	KILLER KOWALSKI Hamtrack, Mich.	290

Best 2 Out of 3 Falls — 60 Minute Time Limit

250	LORD MONTAGUE London	Semifinal Event vs.	won BULL CURRY Hartford, Conn.	225

1 Fall — 30-Minute Time Limit

Note: Matches subject to change without notice due to conditions beyond control such as injuries. Illness or accident—Matchmaker Ed Watt

Referees: Dick Raines, Danny Plechas. Matchmaker, Ed Watt.

COIN FLIP COULD DETERMINE ORDER OF MATCHES

Killer Unhappy!

Caught unawares with a karate thrust to the throat while he was on the apron of the ring, Killer Kowalski was counted out of the ring here last week after a bitter and bruising battle. But he did prove that Tanaka's chops could be blocked and blamed the distraction of the referee for the one that got by his guard at a time when he should not have had to protect himself.

TX '70

KILLER KOWALSKI
TRIBUTE

Kowalski 'Shtinker' to One Fan

By BILL ROEDER.

Wrestler Verne Gagne says he will continue using his famed "sleeper" hold even though it boomeranged against him with near-disastrous effect when an infuriated opponent went berserk at the Garden last night.

"There's nothing wrong with the sleeper," Gagne protested. "All I do is squeeze in the other guy's neck, and it shut off the flow of blood to the brain."

Nevertheless, the sleeper did not sit well with Wladek (Killer) Kowalski. After being pinned by it, he ran amuck. Time was out, and Gagne was standing in his corner with his back to the ring, when the 6-6, 240-pound Killer attacked. Without so much as a cry of rage, he charged across the ring and sprang on his prey.

Fortunately, a warning shout from the crowd gave Gagne time to whirl and brace himself. That probably kept him from being picked up and hurled to his death against the ringside seats.

As it was, Kowalski was able to do no more than seize Gagne by the throat and, as if he were beating a carpet, flail the victim's head against the ropes until a corps of special cops intervened. At the time the match stood even, each man having taken a fall with one to go, but the referee disqualified Kowalski.

Booed Continually.

The crowd of 7322 seemed to take a dislike to the Killer early in the match. He was booed continually, and afterward hundreds of angry fans lined the aisle to shower jeers and insults on the subdued but still sullen giant as police led him from the ring.

Mrs. Agnes Elle, of 121-11 180th St., Jamaica, said she has been attending wrestling shows regularly since coming to this country from Germany 12 years ago and had never seen anything as barbarous as Kowalski's assault. "You no good shtinker," Mrs. Elle yelled at him.

Gagne said he thinks the sleeper is just as ethical as the hold which Kowolski used to win the first fall. That one is known as the throat-stomp.

One-Ear Eric Now.

"I was on the floor," Gagne explained, "and he just jumped up in the air and landed feet-first on my wind pipe. It knocked the breath out of me. It's a pretty rough hold if his aim isn't just right. He tore off a guy's ear with it one night. Fellow named Yukon Eric."

Killer Cues Next Show

Villain Now Faces Rocca

When last Saturday night's all-time Garden record wrestling crowd of 20,675 hooted Wladek (Killer) Kowalski to a curfew-called "incomplete match" wth Edouard Carpentier they were building toward the next mat spectacle in the building, on Tuesday, Nov. 19. That night avenger Antonino Rocca will team with Carpentier against Kowalski and Dick (The Bruiser) Affils.

The latest gathering out drew last winter's top turnout on March 31, another Saturday night, by 575. With a gross of $63,876.14, it also out did the best previous mark for receipts, $62,565 of March 11 when 19,995 attended. There were 5000 turned away.

Kowalski had been disqualified for the first of what was to have been a two-out-of-three-falls event.

Other results: Rocca and Miguel Perez over Prof. Roy Shires and Dr. Harry Jerry Graham, Edouardo Castillo and Luis Martinez over Ludwig Von Krupp and Paul Berger, both two out of three. Don Eagle-Karl Von Hess, draw. The Great Scott over Larry Hamilton, Pat O'Connor over Bob Longevin, Danny McShain over Larry Moquin.

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GORILLA MONSOON VS GOBO BRAZIL
JERRY GRAHAM VS DORY DIXON
PLUS 3 OTHER GREAT BOUTS
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DON LEO JONATHAN and ZACK MALKOV
vs.
BRUNO SAMMARTINO and FRANK SCARPA
HANS SCHMIOT vs. MAURICE LAPOINTE
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